a data acquisition section for providing an output of the rotation sensor, as a gesture input, to the processing means.

19. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

the main body is flexible; and

the gesture input means comprises a bend sensor for detecting an amount of bend in the main body caused by the physical interaction by the user, and a data acquisition section for providing an output of the bend sensor, as a gesture input, to the processing means.

20. The portable information apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the bend sensor detects a direction of bending in the main body in addition to the amount thereof.

21. The portable information apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

a flexible visual display, which is placed in a front surface of the main body, for visually displaying a result of the processing by the processing means; and

flexible direction input means, which is placed in a back surface of the main body, for inputting a direction in response to an operation performed with a user's finger.

22. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the gesture input means comprises:

operation sections attached to both right and left edge portions of the main body, respectively;

a force sensor for detecting force applied to cause distortion in the operation section with respect to the main body; and

a data acquisition section for providing an output of the force sensor, as a gesture input, to the processing means.

23. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the gesture input means comprises:

a pressure sensor for detecting force applied to cause distortion in the operation section with respect to the main body; and

a data acquisition section for providing an output of the pressure sensor, as a gesture input, to the processing means.

24. The portable information apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the pressure sensor is placed in both front and back surfaces of the main body, and detects pressure applied by the user, who is holding both right and left edge portions of the main body, so as to cause upward and/or downward bending in the main body.

25. The portable information apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the force sensor detects a value and a direction of the force applied on the main body.

26. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising:

a visual display, which is placed in a front surface of the main body, for visually displaying a processing result of the processing means; and

direction input means for inputting a direction in a display screen of the visual display,

wherein the processing means simultaneously and transparently processes the gesture input from the gesture input means and the direction input from the direction input means.

27. The portable information apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the processing means performs a process, which corresponds to the physical interaction accepted by the gesture input means, to an object in the display screen, the object being designated by using the direction input means.

28. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

the gesture input means comprises a force sensor for detecting a strength of the physical interaction applied on the main body by the user; and

the processing means uses an output of the force sensor, which is a continuous variable, as an analog value for interface control.

29. The portable information apparatus according to claim 28, further comprising a tactile presentation section for providing a tactile feedback to the user, the tactile feedback indicating the analog value accepted by the gesture input means.

30. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

the gesture input means comprises a force sensor for detecting a strength of the physical interaction applied on the main body by the user; and

the processing means controls a system operation in response to an output of the force sensor if the output of the force sensor exceeds a predetermined threshold.

31. The portable information apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising a tactile presentation section for providing a tactile feedback to the user so as to confirm validity of the physical interaction accepted by the gesture input means.

32. The portable information apparatus according to claim 15, wherein:

the gesture input means comprises a force sensor for detecting a strength of the physical interaction applied on the main body by the user; and

the processing means analyzes a pattern of the force detected by the force sensor, and uses the pattern of the force as a specific command.

33. The portable information apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising a tactile presentation section for providing a tactile feedback to the user so as to confirm successful analysis of the physical interaction accepted by the gesture input means and corresponding successful execution of the specific command.

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